

PROPOSED NEW MOJ QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR SPOKEN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING (EXCEPTING WELSH)

Based on Independent Review of Qualifications and Experience Requirements (June 2022)

CONTEXT

These requirements align with established national and international language qualification frameworks and standards. The two-level structure is based on recognised professional and pre-professional interpreting standards but is specific to MoJ operations and tailored for practical application within a complex service delivery setting. In addition to standardised processes for business-as-usual bookings, there are procedures for handling exceptional and off-contract bookings which are to be managed and monitored within the framework and subject to additional measures. Common, simplified nomenclature is used for clarity and transparency between all justice and language stakeholders to describe levels of assignments and interpreter requirements.

- The title 'interpreter' is applied for ease of use or reference to refer to professionals, pre-professionals or others providing an interpreting service in this context and is to be respected across all service operations and documentation (replacing 'linguists'),
- Two distinct standards are recognised: RQF Level 6 or equivalent (as the full professional standard) and RQF Level 3 (as the pre-professional standard for interpreting in the community).
- The standards described in this framework apply to all languages, removing the distinction between core and rare languages.
- MoJ assignments mostly require an interpreter who meets the professional standard. A small number of assignments have been identified as appropriate for use of a pre-professional interpreter.
- Where an interpreter of the relevant standard for an assignment cannot be sourced, or for exceptional deployments or off-contract bookings, additional quality assurance measures apply to manage or mitigate risk.
- All registrations must meet the minimum or equivalent level of RQF Level 3 or higher. MoJ should retain a record of interpreters with lower level qualifications or experience for the purposes of pipeline development, exceptional deployments and off-contract bookings.

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Interpreter Qualifications and Experience Requirements

PROFESSIONAL LEVEL (RQF Level 6) – at this level an interpreter combines knowledge of **specialist legal contexts and terminology** with the **oral and written** professional skills to provide high level **consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, sight and written translations in two directions** – into and out of English.

LEVEL	QUALIFICATION(S)	EXPERIENCE	NOTES
Qualified Professional An interpreter holding a full specialist professional or educational qualification in interpreting Including Qualified legacy MoJ interpreters	Full professional qualification: Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) (Law) (or CCI, forerunner to DPSI) Diploma in Police Interpreting (DPI) Diploma in Community Interpreting (DCI) (with Police/Courts specialism)	200 hours Newly qualified or <200 hours experience	Newly qualified interpreters or those qualified but with less than 200 hours experience are restricted to pre-professional assignments until experience threshold is met. Non-UK professional interpreting qualifications must be of proven equivalent standard to the DPSI/DPI/DCI (RQF Level 6 equivalence with the full skills profile: consecutive/simultaneous, bi-directional sight and written translation, and justice specialism) (e.g. UK ENIC (previously NARIC) or certified translation). Separate arrangements apply for partially qualified interpreters (see Pre-Professional criteria).
	Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) (Health or Local Government) Diploma in Community Interpreting (without Police/Courts specialism)	200 hours (of which 100 justice-related) Newly qualified or <200 hours experience or no justice-related experience	Newly qualified interpreters or those qualified but with less than 200 hours experience (of which 100 justice-related) are restricted to pre-professional assignments until experience threshold is met. Non-fUK qualifications must be of proven equivalent standard (see above). Justice-related experience may be gained through completion of pre-professional assignments or justice-related CPD. Experience and CPD can be combined to meet the experience threshold.
	A Pass or higher in one of the following educational qualifications: BA/MA/Degree in Interpreting (may be combined with translation), or BA/MA/Degree in Conference Interpreting ,	200 hours (of which 100 justice-related) Newly qualified or <200 hours experience or no justice-related experience	Non-UK degrees must have proven equivalent standard to RQF Level 6 (Bachelors) or Level 7 (Masters) (e.g. UK ENIC (previously NARIC) or certified translation) and must include English. Newly qualified interpreters or those qualified but with less than 200 hours experience (of which 100 justice-related) are restricted to pre-professional assignments until experience threshold is met. Justice-related experience may be gained through completion of pre-professional assignments or justice-related CPD. Experience and CPD can be combined to meet the experience threshold.
	Interpreters listed at Complex/Complex Written level who meet above criteria.	See above	Transfer of registration is subject additionally to no outstanding or unresolved performance issues.
	Experienced Professional An interpreter qualified in languages, supplemented with interpreting experience Or Holding a government accreditation Or With experience only Or Experienced legacy MoJ interpreters	BA/MA/Degree in Modern Languages (includes Language Degrees in English for other language speakers) IND, AIT (formerly IAA), UKVI, UK Border Agency Certificate Experience only – primarily for languages in which no formal qualification is available	400 hours (of which 200 justice-related) 400 hours (of which 200 justice-related) 400 hours (of which 200 justice-related).
Interpreters previously listed at Complex/Complex Written level who do not hold professional/educational qualifications	400 hours of completed Complex or Complex Written MoJ assignments or equivalent justice-related experience	Requires proof of: - language level at RQF Level 6 or equivalent in both languages (English + other language) ¹ - interpreting skills (consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, sight translation, written translation) in both language directions - documented work record from previous 3 years that meets the experience requirement with 3 professional referees. Uncertified skills to be assessed against the professional standard.	
			Requires proof of language level and interpreting skills as for 'Experience only' above, plus: - Subject to no outstanding or unresolved performance issues. - Observation/assessment to be carried out within 12 months.

¹ For first language non-English speakers, the following are accepted as proof of English at the required level: CEFR C1, Cambridge C1 Advanced, IELTS 7, Toefl 94-114, ESOL Level 2.

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PRE-PROFESSIONAL LEVEL (RQF Level 3) – at this level an interpreter has **oral** skills only and is able to provide **basic consecutive interpreting** and **out-of-English sight translation** in **predictable, non-specialist** situations. Qualifications at this level do not typically test simultaneous interpreting or written translation. These and other skills may be held by individual interpreters depending on experience (to be assessed at registration).

LEVEL	QUALIFICATION(S)	EXPERIENCE	NOTES
Qualified Pre-professional An interpreter holding a full community interpreting qualification Including Qualified legacy interpreters previously registered with MoJ	RQF Level 3, 4 or 5 Community Interpreting or equivalent non-UK accredited qualification	100 hours	Mandatory introduction to legal interpreting to be completed prior to deployment. Non-UK qualifications require proven equivalence e.g. UK ENIC (previously NARIC) or certified translation.
	Partially qualified DPSI or DPI (min. consecutive/simultaneous unit + sight translation out of English)	100 hours	Individual units are accredited at RQF Level 6 (professional) for the relevant skills. Additional mandatory introduction to legal interpreting to be completed prior to deployment for partial holders of DPSI Health or Local Government.
	Interpreters listed at Standard level who meet above criteria.	See above	Transfer of registration is subject additionally to no outstanding or unresolved performance issues.
Experienced Pre-professional An interpreter with language skills supplemented with community interpreting experience Or Experienced legacy MoJ interpreters	Experience only – primarily for languages in which no formal qualification is available	200 hours	Requires proof of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - language level at minimum RQF Level 3 or equivalent in both languages (English + other language)² - interpreting skills (consecutive interpreting, sight translation out of English) - documented work record from previous 3 years that meets the experience requirement plus 2 work referees. Uncertified skills to be assessed against the pre-professional standard.
	Interpreters previously listed at Standard level who do not hold the qualifications above.	200 hours of completed Standard MoJ assignments or equivalent justice-related experience	Requires proof of language level and interpreting skills as for 'Experience only' above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject to no outstanding or unresolved performance issues. - Observation/assessment to be carried out within 12 months.

EXCEPTIONS RECORD

These registrations are not for the purposes of general deployment. They are intended to identify and retain prospective resource, to capture potential pipeline for development and progression and to provide an exception reserve of contacts.	
QUALIFICATION(S)	NOTES
RQF Level 1 Introduction to Community Interpreting RQF Level 2 in Community Interpreting	Holders of these qualifications have no, or extremely limited, practical interpreting skills, and are unsuited to both levels of MoJ assignments. They are on a development pathway and should be encouraged to progress to RQF Level 3 in Community Interpreting and beyond. If exceptionally deployed, additional monitoring measures should be in place with observation/assessment at the earliest opportunity.
Existing MOJ registrations that do not meet the criteria for Professional or Pre-Professional level registration	These registrations are likely to have no, or extremely limited, practical interpreting skills, and are unsuited to both levels of MoJ assignments. They should be encouraged to engage with development and progression opportunities and to take qualifications. If exceptionally deployed, additional monitoring measures should be in place with observation/assessment at the earliest opportunity.
Unit passes of DPSI or DPI qualifications	Although individually accredited, Unit passes are insufficient evidence of interpreting skills on their own and holders are unsuited for deployment. They should be encouraged to complete the minimum units required (see above criteria) to gain pre-professional registration, or full completion for professional level registration.
Off-contract bookings	Centralised capture of off-contract bookings provides for improved data and better control and management of such bookings. Deployment of off-contract interpreters should be limited with additional monitoring measures in place and observation/assessment at the earliest opportunity.

² For first language non-English speakers, the following are accepted as proof of English at the required level: CEFR B2, Cambridge B2 First, IELTS 6, Toefl 60-93, ESOL Level 1.

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Notes:

- All professional level registrations require proof of competence in the three core skills at RQF Level 6 or equivalent: language skills in 2 languages, interpreting skills and techniques, knowledge of legal contexts and terminology.
- An interpreter not yet meeting Professional level (partially qualified or lacking experience) may be registered at Pre-Professional, subject to meeting the criteria, pending acquisition of full qualifications or relevant experience. Progression to Professional level dependent on acquiring and evidencing all necessary skills.
- Experience requirement may be measured by direct interpreting deployments or through other defined, approved measures (CPD, shadowing, mentoring etc).
- All registrations should include a record on the interpreter's profile of individual skills (consecutive and/or simultaneous interpreting; sight translation into and/or out of English; written translation into and/or out of English) in order for these to be matched against the skills requirement listed in assignment bookings.
- Proof of experience should normally be drawn from work completed in the previous three years. This takes into account the impact on deployment levels arising from Covid and is subject to review.
- Whilst a good indicator of professional intent, membership of one of the professional membership or regulatory organisations (CIOL, ITI, APCI or NRPSI) is not sufficient on its own to meet the criteria for MoJ professional level registration. Member qualifications and experience still require checking against the relevant criteria.
- All interpreters, upon registration, are to declare any existing or outstanding disciplinary procedures of which they are the subject and any unresolved complaints against them.

DRAFT: agreed in principle and subject to a final decision

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Assignment Levels

Each assignment type has one of two defined levels and a corresponding interpreter requirement. Most assignment types require a **Qualified or Experienced Professional** interpreter. A small number of assignments have been identified as appropriate for use of a **Qualified or Experienced Pre-Professional** interpreter.

Professional assignments require either a **Qualified Professional** or **Experienced Professional** interpreter.

Pre-Professional assignment require either **Qualified Pre-Professional** or **Experienced Pre-Professional** interpreter.

NEW ASSIGNMENT TYPE	PREVIOUSLY	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
Professional	Complex Written	All existing Complex Written level assignment types.	To include <u>all bookings</u> except those listed as suitable for Pre-Professional level below. The following bookings are 'protected' at this level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all assignments that involve the giving or consideration of evidence, or fact-finding. - all trials and substantive tribunals, all hearings related to Employment Tribunals. - all cases involving children, vulnerable or intimidated victims or witnesses. - all committal hearings (family/civil). - all sentencing hearings and appeals against conviction or sentence. Booking form must allow for requestor to indicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - skills required: consecutive and/or simultaneous interpreting, sight translation (incl. language direction) writing/translation (incl. language direction), - exceptional legal or other complexity. - where there may be important media interest. - potentially disturbing or distressing content. -
	Complex	All existing Complex level assignment types.	
	Standard	Standard level types redesignated to Professional level.	
Pre-Professional	Standard	All existing Standard level types excepting those redesignated to Professional level (see above).	To include (but not exhaustive): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all telephone interpreting. - all first, preliminary or plea hearings. - all mentions and applications hearings.

To note:

- Assignment type levels to be reviewed regularly and revised where necessary.
- Professional level assignments listed in the Notes above as 'protected' are unsuitable for deployment of a pre-professional interpreter.

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CPD and Training

All new registrations should include a full, mandatory induction programme. This should include as a minimum; an overview of MoJ and the legal context; role and responsibilities of different jurisdictions; introduction to court and tribunal structures; legal professionals and court staff (including forms of address); court processes and procedures; hearing types, case management and progression; range and levels of assignment types; service operations (how deployments work); interpreter rights and responsibilities; code of conduct (including social media practices); mental health & well-being.

MoJ may wish to consider tailored induction/training for interpreters registering without the requisite experience where the new framework recommends a mandatory introduction to legal interpreting.

MoJ may wish to consider developing its own range of CPD activities to improve overall efficiency in specific areas e.g. handling remote assignments, dealing with distressing/disturbing cases, as well as signposting training for the acquisition of additional interpreting skills and techniques (at all levels).

A 'development pathway' should be created with easily identifiable entry points and routes for competency-based development to encourage take-up of formal interpreting qualifications, particularly amongst the considerable numbers taking lower level community qualifications. A clear pathway with directions for progression has the potential to increase recruitment, incentivise individual development and grow the qualified resource available to MoJ.

New guidance is needed for bookings staff (and potentially other areas of HMCTS/judiciary) on operational processes and interpreting standards, with input from experts from both legal and language professions. This will provide consistency of approach and ensure sound decision-making for bookings particularly when non-standard arrangements are involved (e.g. off-contract bookings).

Quality Assurance

To include:

- Comprehensive checks that the qualifications and experience requirements are applied rigorously in accordance with new policy.
- All new interpreter registrations to be observed within first 12 months and an ongoing programme of observations and quality control of deployments.

Additional monitoring measures to be implemented when an assignment cannot be fulfilled with an interpreter at the relevant level:

- Details of all such bookings to be captured for monitoring purposes and to assist with identification of emerging trends and needs analysis.
- Specific checks on the technical skills required for the booking and compatibility with interpreter profile. Judiciary in court to be made aware of any potential skills limitations (e.g. lack of simultaneous interpreting) in advance of the deployment
- Exceptions policy to include: language and skills assessment prior to deployment when using unregistered interpreters; observation in court, if possible, with recorded assessment and/or feedback; post-hearing review of outcomes with all relevant parties.
- All off-contract bookings to be recorded centrally and subject to additional quality assurance measures for the purpose of better control and management and to avoid serial use of off-contract interpreters.